

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

JUDICIAL WATCH, INC.,
425 Third Street, S.W., Suite 800
Washington, DC 20024,

Plaintiff,

v.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530-0001,

Defendant.

Case: 1:11-cv-01153
Assigned To : Jackson, Amy Berman
Assign. Date : 6/22/2011
Description: FOIA/Privacy Act

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Judicial Watch, Inc. brings this action against Defendant United States Department of Justice to compel compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (“FOIA”). As grounds therefor, Plaintiff alleges as follows:

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. The Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.
2. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e).

PARTIES

3. Plaintiff is a non-profit, educational foundation organized under the laws of the District of Columbia and having its principal place of business at 425 Third Street, S.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20024. Plaintiff seeks to promote integrity, transparency, and accountability in government and fidelity to the rule of law. In furtherance of its public interest

mission, Plaintiff regularly requests access to the public records of federal, state, and local government agencies, entities, and offices, and disseminates its findings to the public.

4. Defendant is an agency of the United States Government and is headquartered at, United States Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20530-0001. Defendant has possession, custody, and control of records to which Plaintiff seeks access.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

5. On April 4, 2011, Plaintiff sent a FOIA request to the Office of Professional Responsibility ("OPR"), a component of Defendant, seeking access to the following:

a. All records of OPR's investigation into allegations that the Civil Rights Division's handling of the *New Black Panther Party* case was influenced by political considerations. The time frame for this request is from October 23, 2009 to April 1, 2011.

b. All records of communication, such as e-mails and memoranda, *about* OPR's investigation into allegations that the Civil Rights Division's handling of the *New Black Panther Party* case was influenced by political considerations between employees or officials of OPR and/or employees or officials of the following entities:

- The White House;
- The Executive Office of the President;
- the Office of the Attorney General;
- the Office of the Deputy Attorney General;
- the Office of the Associate Attorney General; and
- the Office of Public Affairs at the Department of Justice.

6. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A), Defendant was required to respond to Plaintiff's FOIA request within twenty (20) working days or by May 10, 2011.

7. On April 14, 2011, Defendant sent Plaintiff a letter acknowledging receipt of Plaintiff's request.

8. As of the date of this Complaint, Defendant has failed to produce any records responsive to the request or demonstrate that responsive records are exempt from production. Nor has it indicated whether or when any responsive records will be produced. In short, other than acknowledging receipt of Plaintiff's request, Defendant has failed to respond to the request in any manner.

9. Because Defendant failed to comply with the time limit set forth in 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A), Plaintiff is deemed to have exhausted any and all administrative remedies with respect to its FOIA request, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(C).

COUNT 1
(Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552)

10. Plaintiff realleges paragraphs 1 through 9 as if fully stated herein.

11. Defendant is unlawfully withholding records requested by Plaintiff pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552.

12. Plaintiff is being irreparably harmed by reason of Defendant's unlawful withholding of requested records, and Plaintiff will continue to be irreparably harmed unless Defendant is compelled to conform its conduct to the requirements of the law.

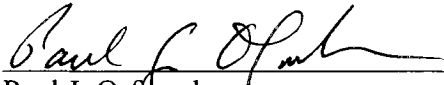
WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court: (1) order Defendant to conduct a search for any and all responsive records to Plaintiff's FOIA request and demonstrate that it employed search methods reasonably likely to lead to the discovery of records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request; (2) order Defendant to produce, by a date certain, any and all non-exempt records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request and a *Vaughn* index of any responsive records withheld under claim of exemption; (3) enjoin Defendant from continuing to withhold any and all non-exempt records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request; (4) grant Plaintiff an award of

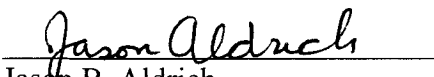
attorneys' fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(E); and (5) grant Plaintiff such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: June 22, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

JUDICIAL WATCH, INC.


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